

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: OTRA, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL COMMANDER

1. DEPARTMENT (EUR/WE) VISITED MARCH 4 BY MR. SORREL AND COL. FONT. OF AMERICAN LEGION. COL. FONT, PAST VICE COMMANDER, ADVISED THAT CURRENT NATIONAL COMMANDER PLANNED TO VISIT MADRID MAY 17-19 AS PART OF A EUROPEAN TRIP WHICH WOULD ALSO INCLUDE PARIS AND ROME. COL.FONT OWNS AN APARTMENT IN MADRID AND IS ACQUAINTANCE OF LEADERS OF SPANISH VETERANS GROUPS SUCH AS JOSE ANTONIO GIRON AND THE MARQUES DE LA FLORIDA. COL. FONT EXPLAINED DESIRE OF AMERICAN LEGION TO EXPAND TIES WITH FOREIGN VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND CITED EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN LEGION IN FRANCE. THROUGH VISIT TO MADRID OF NATIONAL COMMANDER AND HOPED-FOR MEETINGS WITH KING, PRIME MINISTER, US AM-BASSADOR AND OTHER NOTABLES, COL. FONT HOPED THAT AMERICAN LEGION CHAPTER COULD BE ORGANIZED IN SPAIN.

2. DEPTOFF OBSERVED THAT COL. FONT'S ACQUAINTANCES WERE IDENTIFIED IN SPANISH PUBLIC OPINION AS RIGHT-WING POLITICAL FIGURES AND THAT THEREFORE AMERICAN LEGION INVOLVEMENT WITH THEM WOULD BE ASSESSED IN POLITICAL TERMS.

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HE ALSO NOTED CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF US AND ALLIED VETERANS, ON ONE HAND, AND SPANISH VETERANS ON OTHER. HE ADVISED VISITORS TO SEEK GUIDANCE FROM EMBASSY MADRID PRIOR TO DEVELOPING SCHEDULE FOR PLANNED VISIT.

3. COL. FONT SAID HE WOULD TRAVEL TO MADRID END OF APRIL OR EARLY MAY AND TOOK NAME OF POLITICAL COUNSELOR, WHOM HE SAID HE WOULD CONTACT. KISSINGER

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